

Sept. 18, 1980

Dearest Carmen,

Has it been twenty years since those first exciting days..such vivid memories of those times. After those first showings in Bruce's back yard in Canyon..films sometimes shown on a sheet..always good popcorn.. some wine and fine friends...the excitement of experiencing the films which to us, were so new, such a wonderful art..becoming a weekly thing...finding places to show in Berkeley..the authorities always at our backs..showing in my front room, Chick Callenback's backyard in the summer with Strawberry Creek rushing down to the bay in back of the screen adding another sound track..showing in the Bistro Cafe run by the Wobblies, rushing to SF to pick out the paper for the programs which we printed up on the Wobbly "press"...Meeting Brakhage for the first time at James Broughton's..Jane coming to talk about the filming of Window Water Baby Moving, Albert Johnson coming to play music for a ~~sixteen~~ silent film..Pauline Kael coming to talk about film..Will Hindel..so many people helped...writing the News, no grants, no officiality, really by the skin of our teeth, holding on...money for rentals coming from our food money...hand painted posters...how well I know the feel of all the buildings along Telegraph Avenue and Grant Street..when late at night we would staple up our posters on every empty space. We thought we would run out of films to show in six months...after four years we were still going..three times a week..ending up with a more or less permanent place to show at Stiles Hall, California College of Arts and Crafts and the Coffee Gallery. Bruce and I worked almost everyday.. but it wasn't work really...sitting out in the sun deciding on what films, writing program notes, sending out the programs...Sometimes Bruce's mother would print them up on her church mimeograph machine... We were constantly looking for places that would let us show the films.. dressing up in our city clothes .. but there was always some reason it couldn't be done..some law..or the films suspect. Once, driving across the bridge to set up our show at the Coffee Gallery, (we had to take along with Bruce's projector and screen, my bureau to raise the projector up high enough) the screen must have bounced out of the back of the truck...I went back to Berkeley and got a sheet..the show went on on time...the next day one of Canyon's unsung heros bought us a new screen. On the surface Canyon appeared to be made up of a tight organization of many people...but we were very loose..Bruce and I made the decisions...I guess as partners..I know he had the clearest vision..but we had so very many helpers I guess with some sort of good faith in what we were doing...it certainly wasn't done by committee.. it was street theater...The Tripps Festival I think was the end of the beginning of Canyon..it was our last great feast..other people were willing to take over..and Bruce and I wanted to go on with our lives..the avant garde film scene was changing..becoming recognized, getting organized..it was time to leave it and get on with making films..But for those four years Canyon was a life style for us, a great part of our lives..a time of great learning, expectation and fulfillment.. it was wonderful..and we were right, it didn't end, Canyon kept going, more unsung heros, and you, Saint Carmen..keeping the hope, commitment and joy alive all these years...for all of us, for all of the filmmakers.. I'm never able to say this when we meet, how much all you have done means to me personally, and my vision of what all of this means, the movement, your devotion to the vision both Bruce and I had in those

days of providing a continuing home for film artists, and a place for people who love the films to see them...your choice in doing this in your life, sometimes at great personal expense in energy and time..it is a very very special thing. This weekend and the celebration is very special to me too. It is too late for me to come...but I will be there in my own way.
My deep love to you...

Chick